
December 13, 2021

Performance Audit
Recommendations and
Corrective Actions for Audit:
18-02

BRIDGE INSPECTIONS

Municipalities Could be
Encouraged to Take More Action
with Improved Communication
of Deficiencies by the Agency of
Transportation

Dated: April 9, 2018

Overview

The State Auditor's Office (SAO) makes recommendations designed to improve the operations of state government. For our work to produce benefits, auditees or the General Assembly must implement these recommendations, although we cannot require them to do so. Nevertheless, a measure of the quality and persuasiveness of our performance audits is the extent to which these recommendations are accepted and acted upon. The greater the number of recommendations that are implemented, the more benefit will be derived from our audit work.

In 2010, the SAO began to follow-up on the recommendations issued in our performance audits. Experience has shown that it takes time for some recommendations to be implemented. For this reason, we perform our follow-up activities one and three years after the calendar year in which the audit report is issued. Our annual performance reports summarize whether we are meeting our recommendation implementation targets.

<http://auditor.vermont.gov/about-us/strategic-plans-and-performance-reports>

This report addresses the requirements of Act 155 (2012) to post the results of our recommendation follow-up work on our website. The report does not include follow-up on recommendations issued as part of the state's financial statement audit and the federally mandated Single Audit, which are performed by a contractor. However, our current contract for this work requires the contractor to provide the results of its recommendation follow-up.

Audit Number & Name	Rec #	Recommendation	Follow-Up Date	Status	Review Comments
18-2 Bridge Inspections - Municipalities Could be Encouraged to Take More Action with Improved Communication of Deficiencies by the Agency of Transportation	1	Develop a process to notify municipalities when a new inspection report is available.	2019	Partially Implemented	The Agency of Transportation (AOT) reported that they do not plan to contact each municipality when inspections of town-owned bridges are complete. Instead they plan to rely on verbally informing municipalities that bridge inspection reports are available on-line during various meetings. Our audit found that this method was not always effective.
			2021	Partially Implemented	AOT provided examples of correspondence sent to municipalities regarding bridges with serious safety issues. However, there has been no further action taken for this recommendation since our initial followup in 2019. AOT continues to verbally inform municipalities that bridge inspection reports are available on-line, but does not notify municipalities when a new inspection report is available.
	2	Develop guidance on the severity, type, and level of detail to be included in the narrative part of the bridge inspection reports and under what circumstances deficiencies should be communicated to municipalities by letters to the selectboard or governing body, including non-critical deficiencies.	2019	Implemented	The AOT hosted Bridge Inspection Refresher Training by the Federal Highway Administration in November 2018. The course material for this training included the Bridge Inspection Reference Manual, which provides guidance on writing the narrative portion of the inspection report. In addition, AOT's August 2018 Bridge Preservation and Preventive Maintenance Program provides criteria for which types of findings require the applicable municipal governing body be notified immediately.
			No further follow-up is required because the recommendation was implemented.		